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FROM Kika de la Garza

SBA CONFERENCE -- A conference on government assistance to small business will be held in Texas, at Dallas, February 18-19. Representatives of 12 Federal departments and agencies will participate, giving those attending an opportunity to discuss any individual problems they have or get answers to any questions that they may wish to ask. The Small Business Administration says some 1,500 small businessmen and women are expected to be present, and SBA Administrator Thomas S Kleppe has expressed to me his hope that South Texas will be represented. SBA offices in the 15th Congressional District can give detailed information about the conference.

* * *

IMPORTANT HOLIDAYS -- A letter has come to me from the Adjutant of the American Legion's Texas Department expressing support for my bill to restore Memorial Day and Veterans Day to the traditional days of observance -- May 30 and November 11 of each year. It is my hope that we can get affirmative action on this bill, for it is not appropriate that these days should be designated, as they are now, as "the last Monday" in May and November.

Our veterans of military services, those still living (some 29 million of the nearly 44 million Americans who have served in the armed forces in all the wars in which the U S has participated) and those no longer with us, deserve more than such a vague setting of dates on which we pause to honor them.

* * *

RURAL HOUSING LOANS -- The U S Department of Agriculture has notified me that the interest rate to borrowers on insured housing loans by the Farmers Home Administration is being lowered to 8 1/2 percent. Previously the rate was 9 percent.

The new rate applies to insured loans to families for purchase or improvement of individuals homes, and for development of rental housing and improved rural homesite areas. It is consistent with the current interest rate on housing loans insured by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and by the Veterans Administration.

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